

brother-in-law, Norm. I want to thank you all for supporting Mike as he takes on this important responsibility for our country.

It's a pivotal time for our Nation, and it's vital that the position of Attorney General be filled quickly. I urge the Senate to confirm Judge Mukasey promptly. Until the judge is confirmed, Assistant Attorney General Paul Keisler will serve as Acting Attorney General. Accepting this assignment requires Peter—I said Peter—Peter Keisler. Accepting this assignment requires Peter to delay the departure date he announced earlier this month, and I appreciate his willingness to do so. Peter is the Acting Attorney General. Paul Clement, who agreed to take on this role, will remain focused on his duties as Solicitor General, so he can prepare for the Supreme Court term that begins just 2 weeks from today.

Judge, I'm grateful for answering our Nation's call to serve. I look forward to welcoming you as the next Attorney General of the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:31 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Omar Ahmed Ali Abdel Rahman (also known as "the Blind Sheikh"), former spiritual leader of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and former leader of the Al-Gama'a Al-Islamiyya terrorist organization. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Attorney General-designate Mukasey.

### Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Jose Socrates of Portugal

September 17, 2007

**The President.** Thank you for coming. It has been my honor to welcome the Prime Minister of a steady ally and a good friend to the Oval Office. Not only does Prime Minister Socrates represent a close friend; he also has got an important assignment, and that is to lead the EU right now. And so we had—we discussed our bilateral relations. I asked the Prime Minister, I said, "How would you frame our bilateral relations?" He said, "Good." Well, you know, I feel the same way. And I thank you for coming.

I do want to thank the people of Portugal for supporting your decision to help the people of Iraq and Afghanistan realize the blessings of freedom, and I appreciate that. I know those aren't easy decisions to make, but the people in those countries that believe that they should live in a free society and want to live in a free society appreciate your contributions as well.

And I thank you very much for the comprehensive dialog we've had on issues of common concern as the—in your role as the—at the EU. First, we discussed and confirmed that the transatlantic relations are very important for the United States and the EU. And the Prime Minister said he wants to work closely with the United States, and I said I want to work closely with the Prime Minister to keep the transatlantic ties very strong.

Secondly, we talked about issues like Darfur, Doha. We talked about Kosovo and the Middle East. And both of us are committing to working together to see if we can't solve those problems, or at least put them in a better position.

And so, Mr. Prime Minister, you're welcome here any time. I appreciate that you're setting such a good example for people in your own country and around the world by being an avid exerciser at the ripe old age of 50.

**Prime Minister Socrates.** Thank you.

**President Bush.** And you're welcome to come to the Oval Office again. Please.

**Prime Minister Socrates.** Thank you, Mr. President. It was a very sympathetic conversation with you. And thank you for the invitation and the opportunity to present to you what are the priorities for Europe in the months ahead. In particular, we had the opportunity to discuss the transatlantic relation and importance to Europe on the relation with the United States. As a matter of fact, I don't see any strategic question for the world that don't demand, require the most—the better relations between Europe and United States.

And thank you also for the opportunity to discuss some of our more delicate matters

in the international agenda, mainly the question of Kosovo and the Middle West problem. I had the opportunity to tell the President how Europe—[inaudible]—the declaration on Middle East of the President Bush, the nomination of Tony Blair. And we are feeling that the peace process is moving, and it's very good for Middle East, of course, for Europe, and for the world.

Also, our discussions about Kosovo show that the cooperation between Europe and the United States is very important for safety and for stability in the world. And I guaranteed to the President that the first priority I have in my mind regarding Kosovo is, keep Europe united. And we will do my best in order to face the delicate problem, but important for Europe in order to show a strong and united Europe.

Well, thank you very much.

**President Bush.** Thank you, sir. Thank you. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Prime Minister Socrates referred to Quartet Representative in the Middle East Tony Blair.

## Remarks to Members of Military Support Organizations

September 18, 2007

**The President.** Thanks for coming. Laura and I are honored to welcome you here to the South Lawn. Welcome to the people's house. First, I'd like to thank Katy Benko for singing the national anthem. It's not only a beautiful morning to sing the national anthem; it's a beautiful setting in which to sing the national anthem. Katy's husband, Ryan, is deployed to Iraq. Katy, make sure you e-mail him and tell him how appreciative we are of your service, and tell him how appreciative all of us are of your voice.

Laura and I want to thank the members of our—my administration for joining us. Mr. Vice President, we're really thrilled you're here. Thank you for coming, sir. Secretary of State Condi Rice is with us today. Madam Secretary, appreciate you being here. Secretary Jim Nicholson of the Veterans Affairs Administration—thanks for coming, Jim.

For you veterans who are here, there is no more solemn obligation by your Government to make sure you have all it takes to—for your health care and for your support. I feel a very strong obligation, since it was my decision that committed young men and women into combat, to make sure our veterans who are coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan get all the help this Government can possibly provide.

I appreciate the Secretary of the Army, Pete Geren, for joining us; the Secretary of the Navy, Don Winter; General "Hoss" Cartwright, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and his wife, Sandee. By the way, General Cartwright is a marine. I'm not playing to the crowd or anything. [Laughter]

I want to welcome members of this crowd who have lost a loved one in this war against terror. Our hearts go out to you. We love you. The best way to honor the sacrifices that your loved one made, as well as the sacrifice you have made, is to accomplish the mission, is to achieve the peace.

Laura and I welcome the families who have got a loved one overseas, whether it be in Iraq or Afghanistan, fighting these extremists and terrorists. The best way to honor your loved one is to make sure that he or she has the full support of the United States Government as you accomplish the mission that we have set out. By the way, for the loved ones here, I fully understand the best way to sustain a volunteer army is to make sure you're happy—[laughter]—is to make sure you've got good housing; to make sure that you've got good health care; to make sure that you understand that we know that you're in this fight along with your husband or wife or son or daughter. And that's exactly how this administration feels.

For the veterans who are here, for those of you who are veterans in Iraq and Afghanistan, thank you for volunteering in the face of danger. And for the people who aren't veterans yet, still remain on active duty, thanks for wearing the uniform of the greatest country on the face of the Earth. We're proud of you.

I want to thank our service organizations and those who have come together to support our families and our troops. I can't tell you how important it is for organizations like the